

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ISTANB 00955 310915Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00
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FM AMCONSUL ISTANBUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9808
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMCONSUL IZMIR
AMCONSUL ADANA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE ISTANBUL 0955

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SHUM, TU
SUBJ: ARMENIAN PATRIARCH VISITS ECEVIT

REF: A) ISTANBUL 0706; B) ISTANBUL 0745

1. PATRIARCH OF THE ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH IN ISTANBUL MET WITH PRIME MINISTER BULENT ECEVIT ON MARCH 29. SCENARIO FOR MEETING SEEMED VERY SIMILAR TO THAT OF ECEVIT MEETING ON MARCH 7 WITH GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH DELEGATION (REF A). IN STATEMENT TO PRESS WHEN HE RECEIVED PATRIARCH, ECEVIT REPORTEDLY STRESSED DESIRE TO SEE PEOPLE OF ALL RELIGIOUS BELIEFS LIVE TOGETHER IN PEACE, AND STATED, "WE CONSIDER OUR BELOVED ARMENIAN CITIZENS AS INTEGRAL PARTS OF THIS NATION." PATRIARCH KALoustIAN ALSO MADE A STATEMENT TO NEWSMEN TNANKING PRIME MINISTER FOR RECEIVING HIM AS SUCH A BUSY TIME AND PRAISED ECEVIT FOR HIS HUMANI-TARIAN IDEALS.

2. DEPUTY PRIMZ MINISTER EYUPOGLU REPORTEDLY ALSO SAT IN ON THE MEETING. AFTER ECEVIT MET WITH THE GREEK ORTHODOX
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GROUP THREE WEEKS AO, EYUPOGLU WAS CHARGED WITH FOLLOW-UP ACTION ON A NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS BY THAT CHURCH GROUP (REF B) AND MAY PLAY SAME ROLE IN ARMENIAN CASE. ONE NEWSPAPER REPORTED THAT KALoustIAN ALSO PLANNED TO SEE MINISTER OF STATE AKOVA, MINISTER OF INTERIOR AND MINISTER OF EDUCATION.

3. COMMENT: ARMENIAN PATRIARCH IS LIKELY SEEKING
SOME FAVORABLE ACTION AS PRIMISED GREEK ORTHODOX COMMUNITY BY
ECEVIT (REF B). ARMENIAN COMMUNITY PROBLEMS WITH TURKISH
OFFICIALS CLOSELY PARALLEL THOSE OF GREEKS. GIVEN HIGH
PROFILE OF MEETING WITH KALOUSTIAN AND SIMILARITY OF
ISSUES WE WOULD BE MUCH SURPRISED OF GOT DOES NOT TAKE
SIMILAR FAVORABLE ACTION TOWARD ARMENIAN COMMUNITY IN NEXT
FEW DAYS. WHETHER OUT OF PERSONAL CONVICTION OR INTEREST
IN IMPROVING TURKEY'S HUMAN RIGHTS IMAGE ABROAD, PRIME
MINISTER ECEVIT IS APPARENTLY INTENT ON CREATING BETTER
RELATIONS WITH MINORITY GROUPS THAN EXISTED UNDER PREVIOUS
GIVERNMENTS.
HOUGHTON

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